

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Paul Helenberg called the January 22, 2018, regular meeting of the Castle Rock City Council to order at 7:32 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The following councilmembers were present: Lee Kessler, Earl Queen, Paul Simonsen and Ellen Rose. Councilmember Art Lee was excused from the meeting.

Also present: Librarian Vicki Selander, Acting Chief Scott Neves, City Planner Gregg Dohrn, City Attorney Nicole Tideman, Public Works Director Dave Vorse, Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington, and Deputy Clerk II Carie Cuttonaro.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR – NonePRESENTATION/s

Acting Police Chief Scott Neves recognized Reserve Officer Justin Stennick for five years of service. Stennick has donated thousands of hours to the City. Neves stated Stennick has done an outstanding job for us and is one of the few qualified officers that has worked part time in the summer time when we've become very busy.

Marilyn Young Skoglund provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Castle Rock Visitor Center Task Force report, which includes recommendations for the Visitor Center. Young Skoglund reported the task force is comprised of "an amazing group of folks and they put in such a phenomenal amount of time and were so caring about this project." She then outlined the Task Force participants and organizations that includes the Castle Rock Chamber, State Parks & Recreation, Mt St Helens Institute, Cowlitz County, Castle Rock Community Development Alliance, US Forest Service, and business owners. Councilmember Rose and Young Skoglund co-chair the task force. Young Skoglund outlined the problem with expenses exceeding the revenues from the City's share of the Hotel/Motel Tax. She informed Council of other possible funding sources, including increasing the Hotel/Motel Tax, Retail Sales, Permits/Passes & Promotion Ads, Grants/Interlocal Agreements, increasing Castle Rock B&O Tax, and Tourist Promotion Area (TPA RCW 35.101). She reports that there seems to be good support from new Castle Rock businesses, but not with legacy businesses, in regards to increasing the Castle Rock B&O Tax. They didn't have enough time to pursue more information on the Tourist Promotion Area (TPA). Next, Young Skoglund outlined the potential operators of the Visitor Center; Cowlitz County Tourism, Castle Rock Chamber, and others. Final recommendation is for the City to pursue a Request for Proposal to seek an operator for the Visitor Center and recommends the contract include verbiage for a two year implementation timeline, including a mandate to establish ongoing funding.

Councilmember Simonsen asked who was on the Task Force from the County, and what their assessment is. Young Skoglund stated Commissioner Joe Gardner was involved and was instrumental in giving information regarding the Tourist Promotion Area (TPA).

Councilmember Simonsen then asked if the Kelso Visitor Center is operated by the Kelso/Longview Chamber. Skoglund confirmed it is. Councilmember Simonsen asked from where the Kelso/Longview Chamber receives their funding. Young Skoglund replied they have a contract with the cities of Kelso and Longview for tourism funds. Councilmember Simonsen asked the same question about Woodland

and Kalama. Young Skoglund replied that it is the same for Woodland, but she didn't know about Kalama. Mayor Helenberg stated Kalama does not have one.

Councilmember Simonsen asked what the hours of operation are for the other three visitor centers. Young Skoglund replied they have much more extensive hours. They all run six days a week. Woodland keeps theirs open as though it were running a business, adding extended business hours and during the summer, they are also open on Sundays.

Councilmember Simonsen asked for clarification on the money Cowlitz County gets, specifically for north county. Young Skoglund stated the County funds their own department, and does not fund any of the cities. They do, however, provide all of the informational literature about the area for Kelso/Longview, Woodland and Castle Rock Visitor Centers. The County also buys the advertisements in magazines; including the promotional advertisements. These advertisements are run in regional tourism publications and there will be printed versions at the Visitor Centers. Some of the publications talk about Castle Rock, but are paid for by the County.

Councilmember Simonsen asked if the task force knew how many cars travel east on 504. Young Skoglund replied no, however, there is an excess of 100,000 people who go to the Silver Lake Visitor Center. We know there are 10,000-12,000 visitors stopping at our visitor center with part-time hours, but that the same average number of visitors stop in the other two visitor centers with full time hours. It was reported that Johnston Ridge receives an average of 200,000 visitors between the first or second weekend in May and the last weekend in October.

Councilmember Simonsen asked why our Visitor Center does not have a website. Young Skoglund replied nobody has the time or money to do it. She explained that Kelso has one, but they have professional staff running their centers. Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington thought Kelso was able to implement their websites with a grant from Dept. of Commerce and has had it for quite a few years. Young Skoglund agreed and stated now the State does not have a tourism center department. She also stated there are tourism grants, but she does not know how easy they are to get. She thinks Woodland's was partially funded four to five years ago through the Big Idea money, and also has some significant business up Highway 503 and they pay a significant amount of money towards Woodland's Visitor Center. The Hotel/Motel tax collected in Kelso/Longview goes to their business tourism. Increasing the Hotel/Motel tax to the maximum is only an additional 1%, or \$7,000, so we would have to come up with something else.

Mayor Helenberg thanked Young Skoglund and the rest of the task force.

Bill Fashing, Executive Director of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), presented the concept of the creation of a new Economic Development District to serve Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. Fashing provided a little background. The CWCOG has been involved in economic development efforts for many years through the Cowlitz Lewis Economic Development District. That district was dissolved in 2017 due to a variety of issues mainly coming from Lewis County, and the Economic Development Administration has a \$70,000 grant to move forward with the planning process to create a new district for Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. The previous district did a variety of

things; it was a planning effort for economic development, combined the cities and towns and counties efforts along with the development corporations, chambers and others. They created a comprehensive development strategy for the region, and once approved by the US Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), the region became eligible for a variety of grants and opportunities that they otherwise wouldn't be allowed to even go after. All of those are job creation based, so in most cases a tourism grant is not going to come out of the EDA, but it will fund projects like industrial parks, higher education, worker education, worker training, etc. Over the last decade or so, about 12 million dollars of special EDA money came into Cowlitz and Lewis Counties, for industrial park roads, infrastructure of the Lower Columbia College (LCC) and approximately a million dollars for LCC's health and science building. The grants were spread among all communities throughout the region.

The \$70,000 grant that we can get from the EDA must be matched dollar for dollar. Historically, we've matched with in-kind contributions. In the future, the EDA is going to be pushing harder to meet that match. Currently, there is approximately \$34,000 in 2018 budget, up from \$7,000 for several years. Cowlitz County and Cathlamet have contributed. Castle Rock has been contributing cash to the process over the years, but we're asking for a little bit more. We've been pretty happy that the City has been a strong player. The comprehensive economic development strategy needs to be created as part of this process. There have been six public meetings held in the two county area; one a few weeks ago right here in the Castle Rock Senior Center and ten to twelve people attended. Staff is working on compiling all the information, updating strengths and weaknesses opportunities analysis, and starting to put action steps in place to take the new district forward. The hope is to finalize, in detail, in the next 30 days or so, and get it sent to the EDA by the end of March for consideration so that we can have time to turn an application in for 2018; applying for money to continue the program. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support for the Economic Development District.

Mayor Helenberg thanked Bill Fashing.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Acting Police Chief Scott Neves –

-Town Hall (part 1 of 3) was well attended. Part 2 is February 15, 2018. Mayor Helenberg commented he had a great time and learned a lot. Good group of people.

Mayor Helenberg announced that Sergeant Neves has agreed to move to vacant Police Chief. Civil Service has approved. The City is working on a contract. Mayor Helenberg congratulated Sergeant Neves.

Public Works Director Dave Vorse –

-reported 1 of 4 regional wells went offline last Thursday. Pump needs replaced. Estimated cost \$15,000 to repair. Using O&M budget. Well needs to be NSF certified & pump needs to come from Texas.

City Planner Gregg Dohrn –

-reported the Planning Commission has completed the updates to the City's zoning code. Extensive time and effort was spent and they were very thorough. The recommendation of the Planning Commission is to repeal and replace Title 17 Zoning. They had found that the verbiage and the matrix in Title 17 Zoning

didn't always match, providing conflicting answers. An ordinance will be prepared for first reading during the February 12, 2018 Council Meeting.

Mayor Helenberg thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work and was pleased they accomplished so much.

- reported that the Planning Commission is discussing meeting quarterly instead of monthly.
- Planning Commission is currently seeking two volunteers.

Nancy Chennault asked the Council to please consider that we have lost a number of businesses due to the current Title 17 Zoning.

LIBRARIAN

Vicki Selander –

- reported the winter reading began January 20th and will continue through February 28th. A prize drawing for participants will be held every week. All entries will go into county drawings at the end of February for the grand prize of a Kindle Fire.
- Valentine's raffle on February 3rd from 1:00 to 4:00 PM.

Council and Ad Hoc Committees

Mayor Helenberg –

- attending Cowlitz County Commissioner meetings requesting money for Dougherty Dr. and other current street projects.
- attended part 1 of Town Hall dinner; encourages everyone to try and make part 2

Councilmember Paul Simonsen –

- proposing follow-up to Marilyn Young Skoglund's earlier presentation on the Visitor Center Task Force recommendation. Suggested a committee to conduct further research with himself, Public Works Director Dave Vorse and Councilmember Ellen Rose.

Councilmember Ellen Rose –

- Mike Hedges informed there will be a kayak float down the Cowlitz River on September 2nd that will start at the Al Helenberg Memorial Boat Launch, to Gearhart Gardens in Longview and back.
Facebook Page: Kayak the Cowlitz

Nancy Chennault, Castle Rock Community Development Alliance –

- reported pruning of Cherry trees on Front Ave; currently in stage 1 of the pruning process. Stage 1 will look unfinished. Pruning is a 3 stage process to bring trees into shape over time.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Kessler to approve the minutes to the January 8, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.
2. Councilmember Lee reviewed December 2017 invoices received January 8th – January 12th, 2018, prior to the meeting. He did not note any discrepancies. Councilmember Kessler made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve December invoices in the amount of \$11,032.28 as described on the Fund Transaction Summary Report and further described as adjustment EFT562-12/2017 and check numbers 48999 through 49007 for general expenditures. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Councilmember Kessler made a motion, seconded by Queen to approve Resolution No. 2018-01, a resolution supporting passage of an ordinance and adoption of a Charter by the Cowlitz County Board of Commissioners re-establishing the Cowlitz County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) as an independent public authority, on second reading. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.
2. Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Kessler to approve Resolution No. 2018-02, a resolution designating the Water Treatment Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant as Special Facilities, per RCW 39.04.280, on second reading. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve 2018 contract with Walstead Mertsching, PS, to provide services as City Attorney for a term of April 1, 2018 through March 31, 2020. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.
2. Mayor Helenberg tabled action on approval of Police Collective Bargaining Agreement until the next regular meeting.
3. Councilmember Kessler made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve Resolution 2018-03, a resolution supporting the submission of an application for the creation of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Economic Development District, on first reading. By roll call vote, unanimous 'Aye'.
4. Councilmember Simonson requested to receive a quote for website development for the Visitor Center.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Helenberg adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Mayor Paul Helenberg

City Deputy Clerk Carie Cuttonaro